

Naughty On the Stage, But Good At Home

Nazimova Disproves
Theory of "The Man We
Act We Are"—She
Excels in Portraying the
Part of Wicked Women in
Spite of Sweet Character



Does acting a certain part on a stage make players assume that character when away from the theater?

When the amateur thespian assumes a certain role for one performance he is likely to be so filled with the lines and character delineation that he can hardly keep from breaking out when among others, repeating his lines and striking various attitudes he has learned to strike when on the stage. Psychologists and neurologists have declared that the parts we play on the stage become a part of us.

When we act the part of gay, happy women and men, we assume those parts in every-day life. When we act the part of gloomy women and men, we take their part in life.

On the stage there are players who have seemed to bear out that idea. They are very much like the men they act. Madame Alla Nazimova, however, is common with many others, seems to be a direct contradiction to such a law. Nazimova has forty different moods in a day. She loves reporters because then she can change her character on the stage every night.

When we go to the theater and see Nazimova playing the part of some naughty or scheming woman, we get a mental impression that she is bad. In the high class theater that sort of decision is almost as certain as in the melodrama house. In the melodrama we hate the villain as much as we love the hero. We hiss the rascal when he appears on the stage. We can hardly bear the looks of him and all that is because he is just a good actor doing his part well.

"The man we act we are," is true only for the time we are on the stage. At home the villain may be as much as a lamb. The gun-toting feudal may not know how to hit the bull's-eye at ten yards. The death-defying hero on the stage may become in private life, a man who refuses to give his seat to a woman on the street car.

He it is with Nazimova. At her home in Portchester, N. Y., she is an ideal house-maker. Unlike the designing Bella Donna, which she portrays on the stage, her most "wful" designing at her home is to figure how to make roses grow in her beautiful garden.

NAZIMOVA DECLARES BELLA DONNA IS BAD.

Madame Nazimova recently said: "I don't suppose that there could ever have been a worse woman than Bella Donna, although the stage has had many women with a past—Camilles, Tanganyays, Mimosas, Cleopatras—still she is certainly the wickedest one that I have ever acted," and Madame Nazimova, when one considers she has played a great range of parts since she became one of the foremost of the English-speaking actresses, coming from her own lips, it would appear that this statement can be relied upon. The Bella Donna of Robert Hichens' novel, the dramatic version of which was made by James Bernard Fagan, and is now being used by Nazimova, is a woman who has passed her first youth.

The author says that she was well born and was the daughter of aristocratic but extravagant parents. To a great extent Ruby Chapman's life was probably influenced by her parents' pecuniary trouble. Her fame in London society, as a beauty, was very great; in fact, they dubbed her Bella Donna, and she was the most talked-of woman of her time. Her divorce from Chapman ruined her morally, and then began a period of her life which

was entirely at variance with that which had preceded it.

She had men at her feet. Reed magnificently, was a spendthrift and loves money only to spend, not to hoard, there was to be no "rainy day" for Bella Donna. Naturally her beauty under such circumstances was her stock in trade, and

she sold it to the best of her ability.

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